Overview

The Exchange District BIZ's Community Safety Program has developed significantly over the last number of years. Building on our successful Foot Patrol Program, the Community Safety Program now includes more community outreach, safety-related communications, and CPTED oriented audits of the neighbourhood. With the extension of the City of Winnipeg's grant in 2020, the Exchange District Community Safety Program was able to maintain foot patrol numbers at 8 and allowing us to continue to extend both our days and hours of operation. The loss of that funding puts the gains made from that additional coverage at risk. Renewing that funding for an additional year will help us both maintain and improve our program in highly beneficial ways.

Exchange Patrol

The Exchange Patrol creates a safe and welcoming atmosphere, contributing to the community feel of the neighborhood that is the Exchange District. Trained in CPR/First Aid, Mental Health First Aid, and Non-Violent Crisis Intervention, they act as the street-level ambassadors for the Exchange District BIZ and conduct safe walks whenever people may feel uncomfortable walking alone. Businesses in the area call the Patrol when they are concerned about aggressive panhandling, public intoxication, and other uncomfortable situations, and they, in turn communicate regularly with both the Winnipeg Police and Fire Paramedic Services. By being visible and out on the street, interacting with and creating relationships with everyone on the street, from concerned business members to the public, the Exchange Patrol helps visitors to the area feel safe, allowing our members to conduct business and the BIZ and others host successful programming and events, drawing more people to the area and further discouraging crime.

CPTED

In the summer of 2019, we deployed one of our summer staff to monitor and audit the neighbourhood's physical condition from a CPTED (Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design) perspective in order to supplement work our patrols were doing identifying broken or burnt-out lighting. That audit identified over 250 issues in the district focusing on garbage bin maintenance, street lighting, signage, and sidewalk safety. These issues were then brought to the attention of different departments in the City of Winnipeg. As a result of this audit, over 100 issues were resolved throughout the summer term.

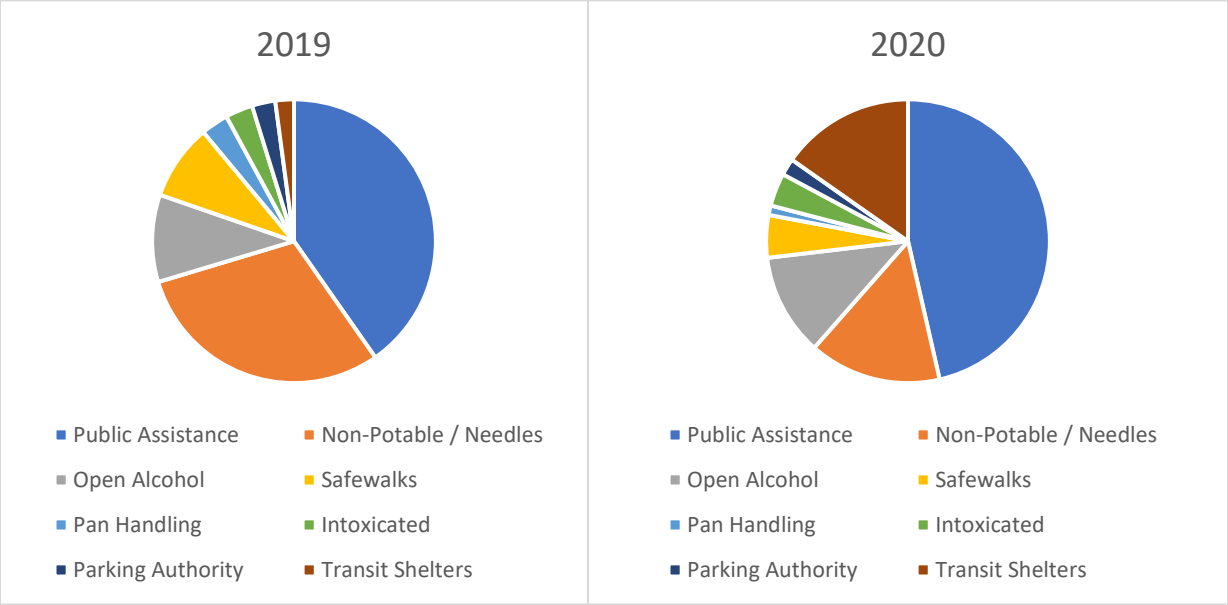
In 2020 we had two patrol supervisors officially trained in CPTED (Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design). The maintaining of these positions, as well as training additional patrols as CPTED Liaison would raise the overall image of the area, increase the feeling of safety, and prevent crime in the Exchange District, providing an atmosphere where a vibrant community of businesses, residents, workers, and visitors in the Exchange District can thrive.

Results

In 2019 and 2020, as a result of the funding provided by the City of Winnipeg, the Exchange District BIZ Patrol was able to employ 8 full time Foot Patrols to cover our 30-block area (see map of Exchange District BIZ boundaries). This allowed for coverage that extends six days a week, Monday through Saturday from 0800 to midnight. Four patrols walk the area during the day shift, and four patrols walk the area during the evening shift.

With more patrols, we were able to interact with more individuals in the area and respond much more quickly to incidents and areas brought to our attention.

In 2020, due to Covid-19 there was a decrease in regular foot traffic in the Exchange District. While this resulted in fewer safe-walk calls, there was a drastic increase in handling incidents involving public intoxication, open alcohol and transit shelter abuse.



STAT	2020	2019	DIFFERENCE	PERCENT
PUBLIC ASSISTANCE	1762	1121	641	57%
INTOXICATED	143	87	56	64%
OPEN ALCOHOL	442	277	215	78%
PANHANDLING	41	87	-46	-52%
NON-PORTABLES/NEEDLES	572	837	-265	-32%
PARKING AUTHORITY	73	74	-1	-1%
TRANSIT SHELTERS	579	59	520	881%
SAFEWALKS	184	241	-57	-24%
TOTAL	3796	2783	1063	